

# **Brownfields Supplemental Assistance**

## ***Lacon, IL***

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5105)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

**EPA's** Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, and safely clean up brownfields to promote their sustainable reuse. Brownfields are abandoned, idled, or under-used industrial and commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years, with additional funding provided for greenspace), to test assessment models and facilitate coordinated assessment and cleanup efforts at the federal, state, tribal, and local levels; and job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, a cleanup revolving loan fund program (each funded up to \$1,000,000 over five years) to provide financial assistance for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

### **BACKGROUND**

EPA has selected the City of Lacon to receive supplemental assistance for its Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot. Lacon (population approximately 2,000) is a rural community located in the Illinois River Valley, which relied heavily on the Lacon Woolen Mill for employment. When the mill closed in the late 1960s after 100 years of operation, the city lost a key business and residents lost their main employer. Lacon currently has an unemployment rate of 7 percent, and 55 percent of city residents are low- to moderate-income. The mill site is located in the city's South Ward, one of the poorest areas of Lacon.

The city obtained control of the 17-acre mill site in 1996, and discovered that the former mill's buildings, groundwater, soil, and floodplain were filled with a variety of contaminants, including asbestos, pesticides, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). The site is approximately 1,000 feet from the city's drinking water supply wells. Some preliminary investigations and cleanup were performed, and a Phase II environmental assessment and cleanup action plan were funded by the initial EPA Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot. However, during mill operations, outfall pipes deposited liquid waste

### **PILOT SNAPSHOT**



*Lacon, Illinois*

**Date of Award:** April 2001

**Amount:** \$150,000

**Profile:** The Pilot plans to assess an area of the Illinois River, offshore of the Lacon Woolen Mill site for sediment contamination in order to facilitate site cleanup and eventual redevelopment of the riverfront area.

#### **Contacts:**

City of Lacon  
(309) 246-6111

Regional Brownfields Team  
U.S. EPA - Region 5  
(312) 886-4747

Visit the EPA Region 5 Brownfields web site at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/R5Brownfields/>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

into the Illinois River, so before the city can proceed with the rest of its redevelopment activities, a portion of the river offshore of the mill must be sampled for contamination.

## **OBJECTIVES AND PLANNED ACTIVITIES**

The City of Lacon plans to use supplemental assistance funds to help revitalize the city's riverfront in order to boost the local economy through more tourism, jobs, and an increased tax base. Prior to riverfront redevelopment however, the Pilot plans to sample sediment in the river offshore of the Lacon Woolen Mill site and pursue a No Further Remediation Letter for the area. When this work is completed, the city hopes to extend the marina located north of the Lacon Woolen Mill site, providing boat access to a new greenspace area for bird watching, walking trails, and fishing, as well as to new and existing restaurants, retail stores, and the American Legion Hall.

*The Pilot plans to:*

- Conduct sediment sampling in the river offshore of the Lacon Woolen Mill site including an evaluation of the depth and breadth of sediment contamination;
- Establish cleanup objectives for groundwater and the river;
- Develop a cleanup action plan for any offshore contamination discovered; and
- Conduct community outreach activities to educate residents on project activities.

*The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.*